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ABSTRACT

In this report the 1982 Alberta Task Force summarizes its conclusions and presents 19 recommendations under 4 priorities. The first prioriity includes recommendations in the following areas having general impact and/or involving substantial general funding: local shares of costs, assessment distribution, supplementary requisitions, supplementary requisition equalization grant, pupil grant weighting factors, and pupil transportation. The second priority concerns particular program grant recommendations focused on special education, industrial education, work experience and business education costs, small schools and jurisdictions, and declining enrollment. Under the third priority are recommendations on other elements related to school finance: regional education price indexes, teacher inservice, and simplifying grant formulas. Included under the fourth priority are recommendations for further study: distribution of assessment, population density, language immersion, early childhood services support, and local level efficiency. Also included are two appendixes. (MD)

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FINANCING SCHOOLING IN ALBERTA

of the
Minister's Task Force on
School Finance

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DECEMBER 1982

CHAPTER I
OVERVIEW

Since 1969, the province of Alberta has reviewed school finance policy and procedures approximately every three years, involving interest groups in a formal or informal process.

The 1980-82 review of school finance arrangements occurred in two stages. The first stage, which began in 1980, provided basic information on historical developments in Alberta school financing; trends and patterns in school boards revenues and expenditures, staffing, pupil enrolments, and curricular programs; and new analytic tools and techniques which could be used in reviewing contemporary school finance issues.[1] The second stage commenced in the summer of 1981 with the establishment of the present School Finance Task Force by the Honourable David King, Minister of Education.

The mandate in the Ministerial order of appointment was:

1. In making recommendations to the Minister of Education with regard to improvements in the ways and means of funding K-12 schooling, the Task Force shall focus on issues surrounding education finance in Alberta today, with particular attention to:
   - fiscal equalization and equity, as particularly regards regional differences in the cost of providing schooling, and the sharing of local school board costs;
   - the locus of control, with regard to limits on local requisitions and modes of provincial funding;
   - equity of school programs.
2. The Task Force shall consider alternatives to the current arrangements in Alberta for financing K-12 schooling, including alternatives to the present School Foundation Program Fund, and shall detail the strengths and weaknesses of each in terms of current Alberta arrangements.
3. With the exception of capital funding, the Task Force may inquire into any matter or thing which the Task Force considers essential to the proper execution of its responsibilities.

In the final Stage 2 report, the Task Force presents its conclusions and makes recommendations to the Minister of Education regarding an Alberta school finance plan. These conclusions and recommendations reflect the best judgements of the Task Force after careful consideration of Stage 1 and Stage 2 research findings and lengthy discussion of major school finance issues.

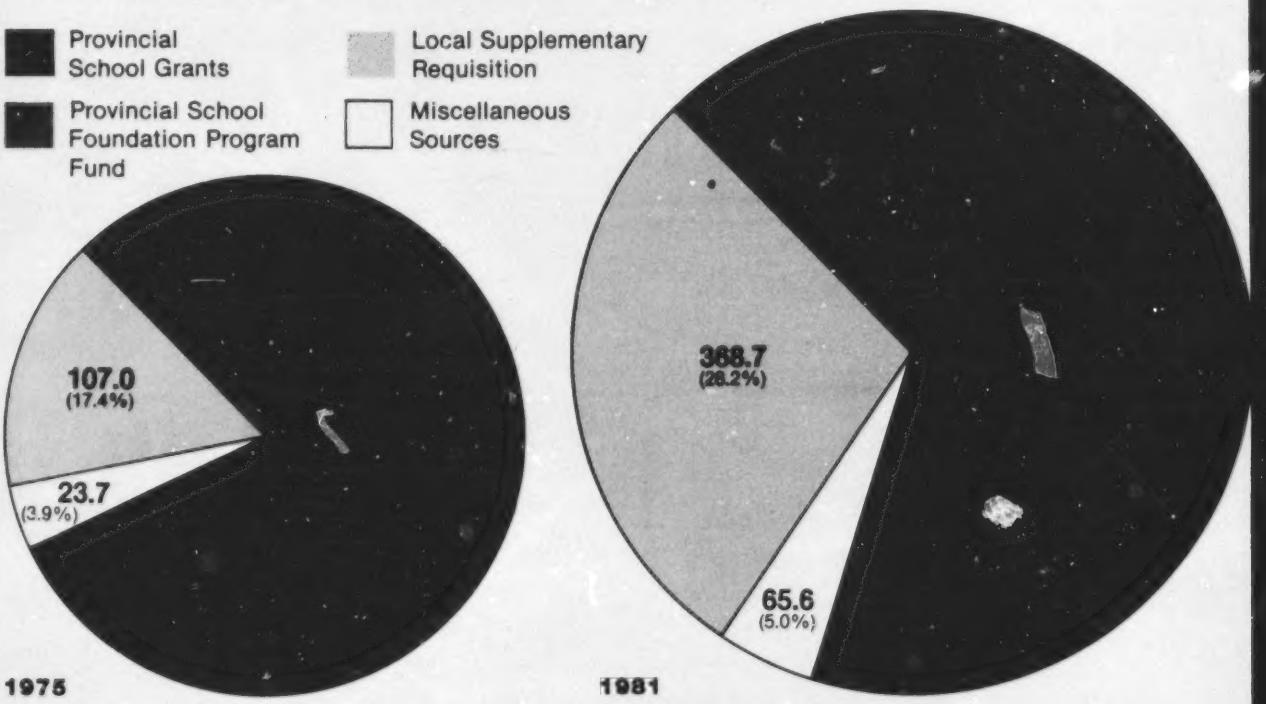
Alberta School Finance Arrangements in 1982

Currently in Alberta, the revenues of local school jurisdictions (see Fig. 1) fall into four major categories: School Foundation Program Fund (SFPF), other provincial grants, supplementary requisitions, and miscellaneous revenues. The School Foundation Program Fund covers basic instruction, transportation, and administration plus debt service. Other provincial grants (under the School Grants Regulations) provide specific support for numerous programs, including early childhood services and education of handicapped pupils; and for unique local conditions, such as remote location or declining enrolments. Supplementary requisitions, raised through local property taxes, are set by the local jurisdiction to provide the difference between revenues from other sources and the total revenue requirements. Miscellaneous revenues include such items as tuition fees (for example, federal funds for students residing on military bases), transportation charges, and receipts from the sale and rental of books.

In recent years, Alberta has experienced a gradual but fundamental change in the pattern of funds allocation. Originally Alberta school finance arrangements relied almost exclusively on the School Foundation Program Fund, which distributes money equally; whereas today there is an increasing emphasis on the School Grants Regulations funding, which distributes money differentially. The proportion of total revenues to school jurisdictions under the School Foundation Program Fund has declined consistently since 1974 while the proportion from the School Grants Regulations has more than doubled between 1972 and 1978. (Local supplementary requisitions also increased substantially during that period.)

[1] The publication, *Financing K-12 Schooling in Alberta: Stage 1*, consolidates the information assembled during the first stage.

Figure 1 **Sources of School Board Revenue** (In Millions of Dollars)



1975
Total Revenue $614.5

1981
Total Revenue $1,308.2

CHAPTER II
AN ALBERTA SCHOOL FINANCE PLAN: General Principles and Major Conclusions

The Task Force believes that judgements about the soundness of a finance plan should be based on these seven principles.

An Alberta school finance plan should:

1. Have as its prime objectives:
   (a) the equalization of educational opportunity, and
   (b) fiscal equalization, insofar as it is compatible with equalization of educational opportunity.
2. Be designed to achieve an educational program which may be defined as the province's educational plan.
3. Provide monies for development grants and in support of selected programs over and above the basic level of the plan, in order to provide leadership towards the improvement of educational services.
4. Provide for a diversity of revenue sources.
5. Recognize the importance of autonomy for, and accountability of, local school authorities.
6. Avoid infringement on local choice of method of program delivery.
7. Allow local school jurisdictions the opportunity to raise money for the financing of public education when such financing is not provided for in the provincial plan of school support.

These principles are ideals towards which an Alberta school finance plan should strive.

The Task Force's mandate was to consider not only how to improve the current school finance grants and granting systems, but also whether there might be better alternatives to the approaches currently employed in Alberta for distributing provincial grant monies.

The Task Force concludes that the current arrangements in Alberta exhibit few deficiencies when compared with provisions elsewhere in North America in terms of what makes a good school finance plan. The present plan combines a comparatively high level of overall support from the general revenues of the province, drawn from a wide range of revenue sources, with extensive special assistance to account for unique local circumstances. As well, the plan allows for a high degree of local choice in programming, spending, and taxation.

However, while the Task Force endorses the current *structure* of the Alberta school finance plan, it argues that the plan can and should be improved through substantial increases in the *level* of funding.

The Task Force has concluded that Principle Two, linking school financial arrangements with a provincial education plan, should be interpreted in light of current school board practice. The provincial education plan is what is happening in the schools now. It is a function of provincial requirements, school board desires and local community aspirations, geography, and availability of financial resources. The Task Force's recommendations in this matter are directed towards enhancing programs and increasing their accessibility in all school jurisdictions without unduly prescribing what these programs should be.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Unlike the School Finance Task Force main report, which details the strengths and weaknesses of current Alberta school finance arrangements and makes recommendations for improvements in terms of the principles, this summary report presents the 19 Task Force recommendations according to four levels of priority.

- First Priority: recommendations having general impact and/or involving substantial general funding.
- Second Priority: recommendations about particular program grants.
- Third Priority: recommendations on other elements directly related to the school finance plan.
- Fourth Priority: recommendations for further study and general commendations.

First Priority: Recommendations Having General Impact and/or Involving Substantial General Funding

Taken together these six recommendations have significant impact on every school jurisdiction in the province, regardless of size, location, type, or financial or educational circumstance. The recommendations deal with the basics of educational finance.

LOCAL/PROVINCIAL SHARES OF TOTAL SCHOOLING COSTS. Of all the issues associated with school finance in Alberta today, none is more provocative than what constitutes fair local and provincial shares of the total costs to local school boards (see Fig. 2). Using the supplementary requisition (property tax) as a measure of the local contribution to schooling costs, between 1975 and 1981 the local share has increased from 18% to approximately 30%. In dollar terms, local supplementary requisitions almost tripled, reaching $370 million in 1981, and the estimated figure for 1982 is about $474 million. Local property owners as well as local governments continue to express alarm over rising school requisitions.

Local property taxpayers are bearing more and more of the costs of education. If school boards continue to rely more and more on local revenue sources, the financial equity inherent in the Alberta school finance plan and the equal opportunities for schooling implied by the plan will continue to decrease. Through use of local tax proceeds, wealthier school jurisdictions will be able to provide more and better school programs than poorer school jurisdictions, and in poorer jurisdictions, the tax levels will become an even greater burden. On the other hand, if the province's share becomes unduly large, the autonomy of local school boards might be threatened.

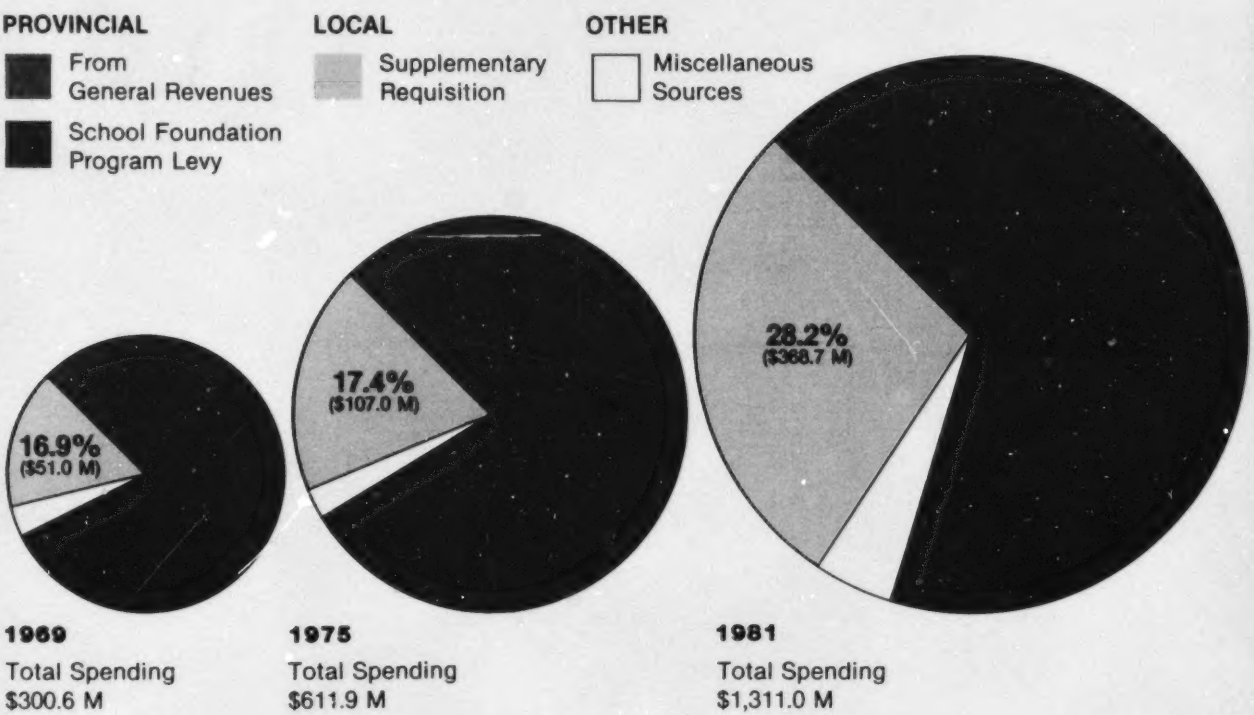
The province sets no real limits on school board spending. The established controls apply only to what a school board can raise through local supplementary requisitions. Even then, current provincial limits on requisitions can be waived locally, through the passage of a school board by-law.

The Task Force concludes that since school boards themselves determine what they spend, the province cannot set its share of total school board expenditure as a target to be precisely achieved every year. Instead, the province should set a goal towards which it will strive from year to year. In some years the target may not be reached; in others, it may be exceeded.

> *The provincial share of total schooling costs should be targeted towards providing an average of approximately 85% of the total expenditures of all school boards in the province, leaving an average of 15% to be raised by local supplementary requisitions.*
>
> *(Recommendation 3 in main report.)*

DISTRIBUTION OF ASSESSMENT. The capacity of a school jurisdiction to bear its fair share of total schooling costs depends in large part on its local assessment base. In recent years Alberta has made legislative changes to ensure a fairer distribution of commercial and industrial assessment between public and separate school jurisdictions. Where the religious affiliation of a corporation is indeterminate, the assessed property valuation of that corporation is divided between the public and separate school

Figure 2 **Provincial and Local Shares of Total School Costs**



jurisdictions on the basis of pupil enrolments. Generally, this procedure has enlarged the assessment bases for separate school jurisdictions.

On the other hand, where religious affiliation of a *residential* property owner is undetermined, that owner's assessed property valuation is credited in full to the local public school jurisdiction. It may be that undeclared residential assessment should be shared between public and separate school jurisdictions on the basis of pupil enrolment, as is now done for undeclared corporate assessment.

> *Provincial authorities should pursue the objective of equitable distribution of tax assessment in all future revisions to legislation governing distribution of property taxes to support educational purposes.*
>
> *(Recommendation 4 in main report.)*

LOCAL SUPPLEMENTARY REQUISITIONS. Authority over school programs and expenditures should be as close as possible to the local community. The province should avoid undue restriction of local school jurisdictions in choosing alternative program delivery methods, and allow local school jurisdictions to levy local supplementary requisitions for educational purposes when funds are not provided through the provincial finance plan. Having met provincial requirements, a local school jurisdiction should be free to determine the quality, quantity, and design of its program. However, local jurisdictions must balance rights with responsibilities. Freedom to make choices locally also includes responsibility for making effective use of resources, and ultimately accountability to the local electors.

Therefore, since the school board is already accountable to the local electorate, the Task Force sees no benefit to be gained from maintaining the current ceiling on annual increases in the supplementary requisition mill rate. The Task Force notes with concern that current provincial controls are discriminatory; these controls suggest that school boards are less financially responsible than other governments. There is no evidence to support such a view.

Those elected to local office should be free to make decisions within the limits of their legal responsibility without being required to refer to their electorate or to any other body. Elected officials, including school board members, are accountable in that they must justify their policies at election time.

The Task Force concludes that provincial controls on school board supplementary requisitions are inappropriate.

> *The provincial controls on school board supplementary requisitions should be removed.*
>
> *(Recommendation 14)*

SUPPLEMENTARY REQUISITION EQUALIZATION GRANT. The province extends the principle of fiscal equalization through the mechanism of the Supplementary Requisition Equalization Grant, which guarantees a minimum per pupil amount for less wealthy school jurisdictions. In 1982, the Supplementary Requisition Equalization Grant guarantees a per pupil yield of 62% of the average province-wide per pupil yield. This "average yield" is calculated by dividing the total amount of tax revenue requisitioned by all school jurisdictions in the province by the number of pupils resident in all those school jurisdictions.

The Task Force concludes that an increase in the Supplementary Requisition Equalization Grant would increase the fiscal capacity of poorer school jurisdictions and tend to equalize taxpayer effort. Without this Supplementary Requisition Equalization Grant, taxpayers in poorer jurisdictions would face higher rates of taxation if they attempted to maintain educational services equivalent to those in wealthier jurisdictions. Increasing this grant to provide the province-wide average yield would also enable less wealthy jurisdictions to enhance school programs.

> *The Supplementary Requisition Equalization Grant should be increased to provide 100% of the province-wide average yield.*
>
> *(Recommendation 8)*

PUPIL GRANT WEIGHTING FACTORS. The Task Force reviewed the relative weights of per pupil instruction grants. Since 1978, the School

Foundation Program Fund has used weightings of 1.0 for elementary students, 1.05 for junior high students, and 1.20 for senior high students. These weightings are based in large part on higher costs at the junior and senior high school levels due to the more highly-paid teachers (because of the tendency of school boards to employ more experienced and highly-trained teachers at the secondary school level).

The intent of the change in the weighting factors following 1973 was to encourage relatively more spending at the lower grade levels, as well as to reflect actual expenditure patterns to some extent. Since 1978, not only have grant weighting factors remained unchanged, but actual per pupil instruction spending patterns have stayed the same; junior high per pupil spending has been 5% higher than elementary per pupil spending; senior high, 14% higher.

The Task Force is of the view that there may be some advantage in simplifying the instruction grants weighting system, by equating the junior high and senior high weighting factors.

The per pupil weights in the School Foundation Program Fund grants, Part A, should be set at 1.0 for elementary students (Grades 1 to 6), and 1.1 for junior and senior high school students (Grades 7 to 12).

(Recommendation 10)

PUPIL TRANSPORTATION. Since 1976, the local share of transportation costs has increased two-fold to approximately 30% in 1981. In Alberta, student transportation costs vary greatly from one jurisdiction to the next, and many of the factors are beyond the control of local jurisdictions, such as the price of fuel, the distances travelled (dictated by the shape and size of the jurisdiction), and the numbers of students transported.

The Task Force concludes that the province should increase its share of funding for pupil transportation to reflect more closely previous provincial funding levels. Also, in the interest of greater efficiency in pupil transportation, the Task Force suggests alternatives to present systems, such as use of purple gas, conversion to propane or liquefied natural gas, combining separate and public school busing in some areas, or provincial purchasing of bus fleets.

The general principles of the current transportation grants formula should continue to be supported, with the following modifications:

a) The establishment of a provincial support level of 85%.

b) Maintenance of this support level through increased funding and efficiency measures.

(Recommendation 15)

Second Priority: Recommendations about Particular Program Grants

Grants in aid of special programs or situations and fiscal equalizing measures to ease inequalities or provide for special needs are second in priority for the School Finance Task Force.

SPECIAL EDUCATION. One special program is the education of handicapped children. To an increasing extent, Alberta school boards face demands to provide programs and services which at one time would have been regarded as beyond the responsibilities of the educational community. Local school authorities believe that in the area of special education, they are paying many non-educational costs with funds intended for education. These programs are a great expense compared to the average local cost of educating a child. For example, programs for severely handicapped children can cost $20,000 per student.

Another problem is that the many different forms and categories of special education funding create confusion.

The Task Force concludes that red tape could be reduced and local autonomy increased through simpler per pupil grants and fewer regulations, which would enable a variety of program delivery approaches.

A simplified special education program should be introduced to reduce funding disparities among jurisdictions, reduce administrative complexity, eliminate the Special Education Teaching Position funding method, and promote local autonomy in developing and using a wide variety of program delivery approaches. Specifically, the special education funding program should:

a) *Provide a common per pupil means of payment based on three categories of handicap for both Early Childhood Services and Grades 1 to 12: Level I (moderate), Level II (severe), and Level III (very severe).*

b) *Improve provincial financial support percentages for handicapped pupils so that average local costs for handicapped pupils in various categories are no higher than for other pupils in that jurisdiction.*

c) *Reduce waiting lists by increasing the numbers of handicapped children served (over a three-year period).*

d) *Continue to utilize the Program Unit Grant for the most severely handicapped children.*

(Recommendation 1)

INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION, WORK EXPERIENCE, AND BUSINESS EDUCATION COSTS. With ever greater competition in the work force, industrial education, work experience, and business education components of schooling are gaining greater importance and are in greater demand. Students, parents, teachers, and administrators want a wide variety of these programs.

Industrial education programs are very expensive because of the high costs of maintaining and repairing equipment, the costs of instructional materials, and the smaller class sizes involved. Work experience programs incur extra costs because in order to offer the program the school jurisdiction must hire a teacher-coordinator. Business education courses require extra funds to buy current equipment, especially word processors and microcomputers. High school vocational courses are currently funded (1982) at the rate of $36.80 per credit, while industrial education, work experience, and business education courses receive no special funding.

Finding marked differences among schools and school jurisdictions in terms of the number of work experience, industrial education, and business education courses offered the Task Force concludes that additional funding might encourage more school jurisdictions to offer these programs.

New funding initiatives for industrial, work experience, and business education should be introduced to:

a) *Fund Industrial Education 10, 20, and 30 courses at one-half the rate per credit of vocational courses.*

b) *Fund Work Experience 15, 25, and 35 courses at one-half the rate per credit of vocational courses.*

c) *Create a capital funding program to update equipment for business education.*

(Recommendation 2)

SMALL SCHOOLS AND SMALL JURISDICTIONS. Small schools and small jurisdictions have additional financial battles to fight because of the requirement to offer the regular Alberta curriculum to a small number of students, no matter what the costs. Two grants under the School Grants Regulations partially compensate for the higher per pupil costs experienced because of low enrolments: the Small School Assistance Grant and the Small School Jurisdiction Grant.

Schooling costs in the smallest schools are inordinately high because of the low pupil-teacher ratio, and it is also extremely difficult to meet instructional requirements in these multi-grade situations. For pupils in such circumstances, correspondence lessons would perhaps be a reasonable alternative.

Regarding the Small School Jurisdiction Grant, the Task Force noted that school jurisdictions serving 1000 to 1499 pupils have unexpectedly lower costs than jurisdictions of any other size.

The Task Force concluded that, despite high costs, the Small School Assistance Grant should neither penalize nor reward exceptionally small schools. Regarding the Small School Jurisdiction Grant, the Task Force agreed that jurisdictions serving over 1000 pupils do not appear to require special support.

The Small School Assistance and the Small School Jurisdiction Grants should be continued with the following provisions:

a) *That the peak grants under the Small School Assistance Grant for each of the elementary, junior high, and senior high categories be applied for enrolments below the peak.*

b) *That the Small School Jurisdiction Grant be continued only for jurisdictions with fewer than 1000 students.*

(Recommendation 6)

DECLINING ENROLMENTS. Declining enrolments create financial problems for schools. The current Declining Enrolment Grant, implemented in 1975, provides school jurisdictions with a one-year adjustment period as they attempt to reduce expenditures to match the declining enrolment revenue, which is paid on a per pupil basis. This grant appears to meet the average board's requirements in the one-year transition period of adjusting expenditures downward following enrolment decline. The Declining Enrolment Grant varies according to jurisdiction size and number of pupils lost, with declines less than 1% being ineligible.

However, school jurisdictions experiencing declining enrolments cannot reduce their expenditures immediately, although the School Foundation Program Fund per pupil grants are reduced immediately. In general, the smaller the jurisdiction's enrolment, the greater the difficulty in adjusting expenditures to match revenue losses. Some jurisdictions do not adjust at all, and some jurisdictions increase real expenditures in the face of declining enrolment losses. Finally, jurisdictions with annual enrolment declines below 1% annually experience as much difficulty adjusting expenditures downward as do those with declines above 1%.

The Task Force supports the current provisions for declining enrolments, with some adjustment for small declines, especially in small jurisdictions.

The Declining Enrolment Grant:

a) *Should be maintained at current levels, plus inflation.*

b) *Should be amended to remove the 1% grant cut-off level, at least for small jurisdictions having fewer than 2250 pupils.*

(Recommendation 7)

Third Priority: Recommendations on Other Elements Directly Related to the School Finance Plan

The three recommendations which are given third priority by the School Finance Task Force address adjusting support on the basis of regional price differences, inservice funding, and grants simplification.

REGIONAL EDUCATION PRICE INDICES. School finance arrangements in Alberta take into account some of the most significant differences in costs to local school jurisdictions of providing necessary schooling services to their pupils. One factor not accounted for explicitly is the differences in the prices of goods and services which school jurisdictions must purchase to educate their students.

In exploring the issue, the Task Force set out to determine whether a regionalized education price index could be used to adjust provincial grants from region to region to account for local price differences, including regional costs of teachers' salaries, salaries for non-certificated staff, and utilities costs. Six regional price indices, paralleling the provincial education price index, were developed.

The Task Force found that education prices, as measured by the 1980 regional price indices, do appear to vary across the province. The one area of the province where popular opinion holds that education prices are the greatest — the northwest — reflects prices only slightly higher overall than those in the south. Either the overall regional indices are wrong, or popular opinion is unsupported.

Perhaps the key lies in the subindices of the Education Price Index: Instruction, Administration, Plant Operation and Maintenance, Transportation, and Debt Service. According to the subindices, northwestern Alberta faces the highest transportation prices and the third highest plant operation and maintenance prices in the province. At the same time, the region faces the lowest prices in the instruction and administration categories. The combined effect for the northwest is to produce an overall education price index lower than what most people would expect, and which masks more marked differences at the subindex (such as transportation) level.

The Task Force concludes that modifying payments to school systems on the basis of the overall regional price index would be inadvisable because there are serious questions about the validity of the data upon which the preliminary results are based. Furthermore, grants adjustments based on overall price differences among regions would not compensate those school jurisdictions facing higher prices in some budget areas (such as transportation) but having a relatively low overall price index.

Provincial funding arrangements should not be changed to provide explicitly for adjustment of provincial aid on the basis of regional education price indices.

(Recommendation 9)

TEACHER INSERVICE. The Task Force reviewed a proposal from the Tripartite Committee on Inservice Education, which had representatives from Alberta Education, The Alberta Teachers' Association and the Alberta School Trustees' Association. The Committee proposed that when any new or revised curricular program is developed, provision should be made for putting the new or revised program in place. They proposed a plan for inservice education of teachers, and also for funding the costs incurred. Provincial and local authorities and the teaching profession should share the financial responsibility for inservice education. The province should make a substantial contribution, particularly when the province is the source of the curricular change. If the province does not support inservice costs when it initiates a new program, local school jurisdictions face either unanticipated inservice expenses or poorly implemented program changes. The teachers responsible for delivering the new curriculum to the students are at a disadvantage if they have not had ample opportunity to familiarize themselves with the new curriculum and its requirements.

Alberta Education should adopt the model for financing inservice proposed by the Tripartite Committee on Inservice Education in October 1980.

(Recommendation 11)

SIMPLIFYING THE GRANTS FORMULAE. A school finance plan should be as simple and efficient as possible, so that claiming the grants and preparing a budget does not become an overly complex task for the school jurisdictions. One method of achieving simplicity and efficiency is to keep the number of different provincial grants to a minimum and avoid duplication of purpose and excessive regulations about the administration and distribution of funds.

The 1972 and 1975 Minister's Advisory Committees on School Finance, as well as interested individuals and organizations, have recommended simplifying the grants structure. Changes have indeed been made, but the number of grants under the School Grants Regulations has continued to increase.

The Task Force concludes that further simplification should be undertaken, provided it promotes both educational and financial objectives.

Relative to combining or terminating grants, Alberta Education should:

a) *Combine Canada Pension Plan allowances and Reading Materials Grants with School Foundation Program Fund instruction grants.*

b) *Combine the Learning Disabilities Fund with either the proposed special education per pupil grants, or the School Foundation Program Fund grants; whichever is deemed more advisable.*

c) *Combine the 3% administration grant in the School Foundation Program Fund with other School Foundation Program Fund grants.*

d) *Combine support for the elementary and junior high component of the Educational Opportunities Fund with the School Foundation Program Fund.*

e) *Terminate the Corporate Assessment Grant in 1984, as stated in current policy.*

f) *Terminate Establishment Grants and the Vocational Education option grant, Section 10 (3).*

g) *For the purpose of day extension grants, consider students under the age of 21 as pupils under the School Foundation Program Fund.*

h) *Combine the Teacher Housing Unit Grant with the Location Allowance.*

(Recommendation 17)

Fourth Priority: Recommendations for Further Study and General Commendations

Finally, the Task Force proposes five areas in which the province should take future action. Several of these areas require further study in order to determine implications for and repercussions on Alberta's school finance arrangements.

DISTRIBUTION OF ASSESSMENT STUDY. As stated earlier, the local share of schooling costs has increased more than 50% between 1975 and 1981. Consequently, many jurisdictions are saying that the provincial share of schooling costs is too small.

The Task Force concludes that there may be alternative methods of distributing wealth among jurisdictions, so that poorer jurisdictions are not placed at a disadvantage when attempting to provide educational opportunities which are similar to those provided by wealthier jurisdictions.

The province should conduct a study to determine the feasibility of transferring from local to provincial control the total non-residential tax assessment for school purposes, for redistribution on a per pupil basis.

(Recommendation 5)

POPULATION DENSITY STUDY. The Task Force speculated about whether a single school finance plan, with special provisions for regions with low population density, was the best approach to financing education in Alberta. Perhaps it would be better to have two or more plans suited to the different demographic conditions and heterogeneous environment in Alberta.

The Task Force is interested in knowing whether systematic relationships exist between school jurisdiction population density and the necessary costs of schooling. The results could have implications for Alberta's school finance arrangements.

The province should undertake the task of developing density profiles by jurisdiction, clusters of jurisdictions, and student and general populations; providing directional projections by clusters of increasing, stable, and decreasing enrolments; and identifying potential implications for costs and funding.

(Recommendation 12)

LANGUAGE IMMERSION STUDY. Second language immersion programs are currently the fastest growing area in terms of program development and enrolment. The province has made a substantial commitment to these programs by maintaining the level of grants for the French language immersion programs, despite the fact that federal funding has been cut by one-third.

It is a distinct possibility that demand for language immersion programs will continue and perhaps even expand. The Task Force concludes, therefore, that assured funding to school jurisdictions offering these programs is vital.

Alberta Education should undertake a study of the future needs and impacts of language immersion programs on school systems, in terms of fiscal resources required.

(Recommendation 13)

STUDY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES SUPPORT. As noted in the discussion preceding Recommendation 17 (see p. 10), the Task Force is interested in simplifying and streamlining the grants structure for school jurisdictions.

> *Alberta Education should initiate a research study to examine the feasibility, desirability, and implications of combining Early Childhood Services support with the School Foundation Program Fund.*
>
> *(Recommendation 16)*

EFFICIENCY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. Representatives of municipal authorities on the Task Force reported difficulties in paying school board requisitions in the spring, prior to the annual tax billing. The municipal tax authority pays what the school jurisdiction requisitions, even when the municipality experiences difficulties in tax collection. To avoid the high costs of borrowing to fund school systems, the municipal authorities would prefer interim tax billing on a quarterly or monthly basis.

> *To help solve the problems that municipal authorities encounter in meeting the statutory deadlines for school board requisitions, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties should be supported in their request for changes in legislation to permit interim tax billing.*
>
> *(Recommendation 18)*

In addition, the Task Force discussed how better working relationships between school and municipal authorities could be promoted, in order that funds could be used as effectively as possible.

> *Alberta Education and Alberta Municipal Affairs should cooperate in encouraging positive working relationships between local school authorities and local municipal authorities in order to ensure the efficient and effective expenditure of tax dollars.*
>
> *(Recommendation 19)*

These 19 recommendations delineate the conclusions of the School Finance Task Force regarding the mechanisms and operations of a sound and efficient school finance plan for Alberta.

APPENDIX A
1981-82 School Finance Task Force Membership

During its term of office, from June 12, 1981 to December 31, 1982, the School Finance Task Force held 11 meetings which involved a total of 14 meeting days. Persons attending Task Force meetings included "core" voting members, who represented the organizations designated in the Ministerial Order establishing the Task Force; additional non-voting members, who represented organizations which the Minister had invited to attend at their discretion; and Alberta Education support staff from the Planning and Research Branch. Most organizations chose a primary and an alternate representative in order to readily provide for substitutes when a primary delegate could not attend.

The following people served as "core" committee members:

Chairman
Dr. James Hrabi, Associate Deputy Minister, Alberta Education

Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties
Mr. Thomas Musgrove (Primary), Reeve, County of Newell
Mr. Joe Smith (Alternate), Reeve, County of Barrhead

Alberta Education
Dr. W. R. Duke, Director, Finance, Statistics, and Legislation
Dr. E. A. Torgunrud, Director, Field Services

Alberta Municipal Affairs
Mr. Tom Forgrave, Assistant Deputy Minister, Municipal Administrative Services Division

Alberta School Trustees' Association[1]
Mr. Philippe Gibeau (Primary), President, Alberta School Trustees' Association
Mr. Raymond Clark (Primary), Member, Board of Education, County of Forty Mile
Ms. Iris Evans (Alternate), Member, Board of Education, County of Strathcona

The Alberta Teachers' Association
Dr. Charles Hyman (Primary), Executive Assistant
Dr. Bernard Keeler (Alternate), Executive Secretary

Alberta Treasury
Mrs. Lynne Duncan (Primary), Assistant Deputy Provincial Treasurer, Fiscal Policy and Economics
Mr. Larry Morrison (Alternate) Director, Budget Planning and Economics

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
Mr. Chuck Knight (Primary), President, AUMA; Alderman, Fort McMurray
Mr. George Cuff (Alternate), Mayor, Spruce Grove
Mr. Ken Fearnley (Alternate from May 1982), Mayor, Bon Accord

Conference of Alberta School Superintendents
Dr. Peter Bargen (Primary), Superintendent of Schools, St. Albert Protestant Separate School District
Mr. E. L. Deutscher (Alternate), Superintendent of Schools, Lac La Biche School Division

Public Representative
Mr. Harvey Bliss, Vice President, Finance, University of Calgary

School Business Officials of Alberta
Mr. Murray Lloyd (Primary), Secretary-Treasurer, Willow Creek School Division
Mr. R. G. Jenkins (Alternate), Superintendent of Finance, Calgary Board of Education

The following people served as additional non-voting members:

Alberta Chamber of Commerce
Mr. John Milligan

Alberta Education Management Society
Mr. A. A. (Scotty) Day, Consultant, Edmonton Regional Office of Education

Alberta Education, Early Childhood Services Branch
Dr. Irving Hastings, Director

Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations
Mrs. Carol Buckley (Primary to October 1981), Vice President
Mrs. Carole Tyndall (Primary after October 1981), Central Regional Vice President
Mrs. Joyce Westerlund (Alternate), President

Alberta Federation of Labour
Ms. Pamela Kirkwood (Primary to May 1982)
Mr. David Eastmead (Primary after May 1982)
Ms. Valerie Johnson (Alternate)

[1]The Ministerial Order designated two representatives from the Alberta School Trustees' Association.

Association of Independent Schools and Colleges of Alberta
Mr. Lee Hollaar (Primary), Principal, Edmonton Christian High School
Mr. Murray Lauber (Alternate), Principal, Camrose Lutheran College

Early Childhood Services Community Operators
Ms. Bonnie Ladner

The following people from the Planning and Research Branch of Alberta Education served as support staff to the Task Force:

Executive Secretary and Project Director
Mr. W. Leigh Hill, Associate Director, Planning and Research Branch

Administrative Secretary
Mr. Ray LaFleur, Consultant, Planning and Research Branch

Consultants and Production Staff
Mr. Gerry Ewert
Ms. Anita Jenkins
Dr. J. Collins Meek
Linda M. Youell

APPENDIX B
List of Studies: Stages 1 and 2 of "Financing Schooling in Alberta" Project

STAGE 1 STUDIES

Caldwell, Brian. "Alberta School Finance Developments, 1972-1980."

Ellis, D. W. and Associates. "Enrolment Projections System."

Hill, W. Leigh and Bruce Paige. "Defining the Local Contribution to Local School Expenditures."

Hill, W. Leigh and H. King. "Fiscal Equalization Among Alberta School Systems."

Nichols, Peter C. and Associates. "Taxation and Assessment Issues in Educational Finance."

Peat, Marwick and Partners. "Disaggregating and Revising the Alberta Education Price Index."

Peat, Marwick and Partners. "School Finance Computer Model."

Ratsoy, Eugene *et al.* "Situation Reviews on Financing Schooling in Alberta."

Symyrozum, Lloyd E. "Measuring the Scope and Depth of Alberta School Programs."

STAGE 2 STUDIES

Contracted Research Studies

Bumbarger, C. S., D. Richards and J. E. Seger (University of Alberta). "Funding Basic Education in Alberta."

Earle, John A. "School Programs Review and Analysis."

Jefferson, Anne L. "Residential and Non-Residential Equalized Assessment Distribution."

Jefferson, Anne L. "Small School Assistance/Small Jurisdiction Grants Review."

Rislan Enterprises. "Rural Transportation Study."

Sage Institute (Edmonton) Ltd. "Special Education Costing."

Youell, Linda M. "Regionalization of Alberta Education Price Index."

Staff Papers

Harder, J. D. "Industrial/Vocational/Business Education Proposal."

Hill, W. Leigh and J. Ochitwa. "Alternative Cost-Sharing Formulae."

Hill, W. Leigh and J. Ochitwa. "Local Supplementary Requisitions Review."

Hussey, Kelvin A. and Tom Milne. "Coalescence of Grants Study."

Hussey, Kelvin A. and Tom Milne. "Urban Transportation Review."

Meek, J. Collins. "Declining Enrolment Grant."

Meek, J. Collins. "Special Education Funding Proposal."

SOURCES AND AVAILABILITY OF STUDIES

Stage 1 studies are published in a document entitled *Financing K-12 Schooling in Alberta: Stage 1* (Alberta Education, 1981). Stage 2 studies are unpublished. Several studies are available on request from Alberta Education, Devonian Building, 11160 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta. T5K 0L2; Ph. (403) 427-7219.

Copies of the Stage 2 School Finance Task Force report and this summary are also available at the same address.